

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PKOD-5

file

12 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, OBG

SUBJECT : Special Projects Staff Consideration of
International Environmental Problems

1. It is no intelligence breakthrough to note that many people, here and abroad, have belatedly awakened to the fact that man has made great and diligent strides toward destroying, or at least permanently harming, great parts of his natural environment. The degree and manner of this destruction is only hazily known, and in many parts of the world little understood or appreciated. Both Executive and Legislative elements in the U. S. Government, however, have become keenly aware of this urgent situation, and -- in both foreign and domestic matters -- have begun efforts to preserve and improve the environment. Nevertheless, the most well-meaning endeavor will accomplish little unless there is available to those responsible for policy decisions a body of knowledge, a source of information, identifying precisely how many, where, and what kind of destructive forces are presently at work, what nations and international organizations are involved, and what measures are already being applied to prevent further environmental harm.

2. Although the Intelligence Community has been little concerned with environmental considerations to date, and in fact has taken a casual if not bemused attitude toward such things, it seems logical to expect that as U. S. foreign policy becomes more and more aimed toward curbing destructive international environmental practices, the Intelligence Community will be expected to support executive decision-making with evaluated information on a whole host of physical and social environmental problems. (For example, the Community should be able to furnish information on foreign environmental practices well in advance of the U. N. Conference on the Human Environment to be held at Stockholm in 1972.) As one step toward improving our intelligence posture in this field, and thus being

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

better able to anticipate and answer the many questions that are bound to be asked, I propose that the Special Projects Staff (when staffed) undertake the following series of research and analytical tasks.

a. The Staff will develop a roster of international and national organizations, both private and governmental, which deal with specific international environmental problems. It will further attempt to determine the research and operational programs of each such organization. As a separate but related endeavor, the Staff will prepare a bibliography, or bibliographic guide, to the relevant literature. As part of the task, the Staff also will accumulate information on all international agreements and treaties that have environmental objectives or implications. During the process of building this data base, the Staff will attempt to identify areas of duplication, conflict, and omission. In other words, this task is concerned with who is doing what in the international environmental fields.

b. The second task will be to prepare -- or to coordinate the preparation of -- a series of research studies on specific environmental problems which have, or may have, international implications or repercussions. E. g., how detrimental to the environment of the Baltic area, and to international relations, is the industrial air pollution originating in Western Europe; how great is, and who is responsible for, the spillage of oil into the high seas and what are the various foreign national policy positions on the problem; what geographical area is affected by the polluted waters of such international rivers as the Rhine? In each case, due consideration must be given to the attitudes of the nations concerned to each of these environmental incursions. E. g., are the people in the downstream countries seriously alarmed and agitated by the polluting of the water they receive, and how is this affecting their international behavior? Stated differently, could such modern-day environmental problems create the kind of international hostility that, in an earlier time, developed over political boundary disputes?

*Inventory
potential
+
existing
conflicts*

c. A third task will be to investigate the means by which environmental destruction can be identified and measured, with or without the knowledge and cooperation of the offending parties.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Some evidence of such destruction probably will be found by use of the traditional information sources, such as professional literature, press and electronic media, and foreign

25X1C

d. Throughout each of the tasks described above, there runs the possibility -- the fear -- that both researcher and policy-level user of the end result could be swamped by the vastness of the problems involved and the sheer mass of the data. Hopefully, the early and steady use of Automatic Data Processing techniques and equipment to build the data base will help to avoid or lessen such difficulties. If, for instance, all bibliographic references, treaties, and information sources are filed and cross-referenced by various ADP handles, they could be readily available for recall for use in the examination of either topical or geographic problems.

25X1A9a

Chief,
Special Projects Staff

cc: DD/BGI
SA/D/BGI

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~